

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 2, replace the second paragraph as follows:

--in pyridine at room temperature. This method has been described in US 4,604,463 the following documents: US 4,604,463 (T. M. Kanagawa, S. Sawada, K. Nokata, E. Sugino, M. Mutai), issued on August 5, 1986; S. Sawada, S. Okajima, R. Aiyama, K. Nokata, T. Furuta, T. Yokokura, E. Sugino, K. Yamachuchi, T. Miyasaka, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Bulletin 1991, 39(6), 1446-1454; WO 96/31513 (K. E. Henegar, J. C. Sih), published on October 10, 1996; US 6,235,907 (K. E. Henegar, J. C. Sih), issued on May 22, 2001; US 6,444,820 (K. E. Henegar, J. C. Sih), issued on September 3, 2002.

However, this method of preparation of irinotecan base suffers from the fact that in the condensation coloured impurities are formed which have to be removed by adsorption on a silica gel column and subsequent recrystallization from ethanol. These purification steps are accompanied by substantial losses of the final product and its yields are only about 64 %. Moreover, the method requires distillation of pyridine, extraction of a chloroform layer with sodium carbonate and sodium chloride solutions, and drying of the chloroform layer over magnesium sulfate. Therefore, a better method of preparation of irinotecan base was needed. Such a goal has been achieved by the method according to the present invention.--